

Dear sir,

Granting marketing companies the right to deliver direct-to-voice-mail messages means that unknown third parties get the right to deny me access to meaningful voice-mails by making it long and difficult for me to access these voice-mails, or impossible for other to deliver me important voice-mails (e.g. the voice-mail box has reached the quota set by the phone company).

Small businesses all around the nation rely on voice-mail messages for customer relationship. I had a water leak a few weeks ago and called my plumber right away. Since he is working on customer site most of the time, such calls end on his mobile phone voice-mail. In this case the plumber was able to respond within 10-20 minutes and be at my home within one hour. If his voice-mail box had been littered with marketing messages, my plumber would have lost one business opportunity, and I would have suffered the loss of having running water at home for hours.

There is a possible safety issue: if my wife leaves a voice-mail asking me to take charge of our son because an incident that prevents her from doing so, and from accessing the Internet, I may not be able to receive her message.

I request that, in addition to banning direct-to-voice-mail, the commission mandates phone companies to:

- setup a voice-mail tag system, with at least one preset tag identifying a call as “marketing”,
- exclude voice-mail messages marked with the “marketing” tag from any enforced voice-mail quota calculation, and
- provide users with a quick and easy-to-use method for filtering voice-mail messages by token when accessing the voice-mail messages from their phone.

I also request that the commission mandates marketing companies to register their unsolicited calls using that “marketing” token. The commission must confirm the right of phone companies to delete such marketing voice-mail messages if the volume of messages could put at risk the ability of the phone company to deliver its service to its customers, or cause a significant cost burden to the phone company.

The cost of setting up such a limited tag system is very low. The cost to marketing companies of registering the “marketing” tag is negligible. The benefit to users is significant, as they can now choose when to listen to these marketing messages, or access their normal messages in a quick manner when they have a need to do so.